

IBBY-ASAHI READING PROMOTION AWARD, 1991

The Children's Library Project of the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children of India (AWIC) has been chosen as the recipient of the 1991 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award. The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award is the annual IBBY award for the promotion of children's book programmes, given to a group or an institution, which by its outstanding activities is judged to have made a lasting contribution for developing book promotion programmes for children and young people. The prize consists of a diploma and a sum of one million Japanese Yen, which is given to encourage the winner to further its activities in the future. The sponsor of the award is the Japanese newspaper company Asahi Shimbun. The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award will be given to a representative of the AWIC Children's Libraries Project during a ceremony at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, 4 April 1991.

The aim of the AWIC's Children's Library Project, which was launched in 1983, is to promote the reading habit in children and to make books available to them within easy reach. Libraries have been set up in major cities as well as in rural areas. Members of AWIC operate the libraries on a voluntary basis in their homes. The books have in part been donated and some are bought with the library membership money. Children are charged a nominal monthly membership fee, but no fee is collected from economically disadvantaged children. The children are motivated to use the libraries by numerous activities such as storytelling, quiz programmes, painting competitions, etc. Library users are asked to

write comments about the books they have read and they select the author, illustrator and publisher for the AWIC's biannual Children's Choice Awards.

Considering the tremendous potential for expansion and the need to provide books for children the AWIC proposes to open more libraries in villages; to open children's libraries for underprivileged children living in city slums; to organize libraries in the children's wards of the hospitals in Delhi and in other cities; and to start libraries in metropolitan children's parks.

The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award Jury considers it especially significant that the library services are offered not only in large metropolitan centres but also in rural areas. The project takes into consideration local conditions and does not merely make books available but also motivates children to use them. While the libraries are also creating awareness among parents about the need to give good books to children, experiences and investigations throughout the world have shown that books must be made available to children where they spend much of their time instead of waiting until parents or others take the initiative. Thus the AWIC's proposal to provide books in the children's wards of hospitals, in parks, etc. promises to be especially effective and worthy of support.

The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award Jury consisted of the IBBY Executive Committee members Barbara Scharioth (Germany) as chairperson, Carmen Garcia Moreno (Mexico), Torill Hansen (Norway), Ronald Jobe (Canada) and Yuriko Momo (Japan).